

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 01226 282038Z

64

ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6641

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION USBERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 1226

GENEVA FOR USDEL CSCE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EG, GE, UR, WB

SUBJECT: SOVIET STANCE ON BERLIN

REF: MOSCOW 1047

1. SUMMARY. THE FRG EMBASSY HAS DESCRIBED TO US A RECENT CONVERSATION BETWEEN AMBASSADOR SAHM AND DEPFONMIN ZEMSKOV. ZEMSKOV TOOK A VERY FIRM LINE ON BERLIN, EVEN ACCUSING THE FRG OF BREAKING AGREEMENTS REACHED ON THAT ISSUE DURING THE SCHMIDT VISIT. OUR FRG COLLEAGUES HERE HAVE COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT, AS INDICATED BY THE SOVIET HARD LINE ON BERLIN AND ON PEACEFUL CHANGE IN CSCE (SEPTTEL), THE SOVIETS ARE MOVING INTO A HOLDING PATTERN ON IMPROVING POLITICAL RELATIONS OVERALL WITH THE WEST. WE THINK THE CONCLUSION IS OVERDRAWN (REFTEL). SAHM HAS ALSO TOLD US THAT BRANDT'S
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 01226 282038Z

INVITATION TO VISIT MOSCOW IN MAY OR JUNE PROBABLY CAME

DIRECTLY FROM BREZHNEV (THROUGH FALIN).

2. SOVIET PRESS COVERAGE ON THE FRG HAS GOTTEN A BIT TOUGHER IN RECENT WEEKS, WITH STRAUSS' VISIT TO CHINA RECEIVING MUCH COVERAGE, ALL OF IT PREDICTABLE; THE PRESS HAS ALSO BEEN PLAYING UP THE KREISKY-GENSCHER CONFLICT ON THE AUSTRIAN-GDR CONSULAR AGREEMENT. END SUMMARY.

3. ZEMSKOV CAME DOWN HARD ON BERLIN. HE SAID THAT IF THE FRG EXPECTS GOOD RELATIONS TO CONTINUE, IT WILL HAVE TO CEASE ATTEMPTS TO VIOLATE THE QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT THROUGH CREATING "PRECEDENTS." WEST BERLIN HAS BEEN AND REMAINS A "SPECIAL POLITICAL ENTITY." THE CITY WAS WON AT THE COST OF 400,000 SOVIET LIVES, ZEMSKOV CONTINUED, AND IT WAS A MISTAKE TO HAVE GIVEN THE CITY TO THE WESTERN ALLIES. ZEMSKOV ALSO ACCUSED THE FRG OF RENEGING ON AGREEMENTS REACHED ON BERLIN DURING THE SCHMIDT VISIT.

4. COMMENT: WE UNDERSTAND THAT SAHM WAS TAKEN ABACK BY THE LAST ACCUSATION, FOR THE FRG EMBASSY HERE FEELS THAT IN FACT THE OPPOSITE HAS HAPPENED--THAT AN UNDERSTANDING WHICH THEY FELT HAD BEEN REACHED WITH THE SOVIETS DURING THE SCHMIDT VISIT ON BERLINER PARTICIPATION IN FRG AGREEMENTS WITH THIRD COUNTRIES APPARENTLY HAS FALLEN THROUGH, AND THE SOVIETS ARE AGAIN TOEING THE HARD LINE ON THAT ISSUE. THE FRG THOUGHT THAT IT HAD WON SOVIET AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATION BY WEST BERLINERS ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS IN EXCHANGES FLOWING FROM, INTER ALIA, THE SCIENTIFIC-TECHNOLOGICAL AGREEMENT. THE FORMULA WOULD SUPPOSEDLY BEHOLD NEITHER DOMICILE NOR PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY (I.E., RESIDENCE OR WORK IN WEST BERLIN) WOULD DISQUALIFY POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS. THE FRG EMBASSY HERE NOW SAYS THAT THE SOVIETS ARE SAYING IN BONN THAT WEST BERLIN RESIDENTS CANNOT PARTICIPATE IN BILATERAL AGREEMENTS. THE FRG IS THEREFORE, ACCORDING TO THIS SAME SOURCE, AGAIN HOLDING UP CONCLUSION OF THE AGREEMENT.

5. THIS OF COURSE IS NOT THE FIRST TIME IN THE RECENT PAST THAT THE WEST GERMANS HAVE BEEN DIDDLED BY THE SOVIETS ON WEST BERLIN. THE "UNDERSTANDING" ON LEGAL ASSISTANCE REACHED DURING THE SCHEEL VISIT IN NOVEMBER 1973 SOON PROVED TO BE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 01226 282038Z

ILLUSORY, AND BY THE SCHMIDT VISIT A YEAR LATER PROSPECTS FOR PROGRESS ON THIS PROBLEM WERE RATED IN THE COMMUNIQUE AS EVEN LOWER THAN ON THE GENERAL PROBLEM OF WEST BERLINER PARTICIPATION IN FRG-SOVIET PACTS.

6. IN BOTH CASES THE FRG WAS APPARENTLY MISLED BY SOVIET "ASSURANCES" WHICH WERE ACCEPTED ON FAITH BY THE FRG WITHOUT PUBLIC, EXPLICIT CONFIRMATION BY THE SOVIETS. IN THE FIRST

INSTANCE (ON LEGAL ASSISTANCE) SCHEEL ADDED HIS UNILATERAL INTERPRETATION (THAT COURT-TO-COURT DEALINGS WOULD BE A POSSIBLE BASIS FOR SETTLEMENT) TO THE AGREED JOINT STATEMENT. THE JOINT STATEMENT ITSELF WAS NONCOMMITAL ON THE ISSUE, AND THOUGH THE SOVIETS TOOK NO MEASURES TO DIVORCE THEMSELVES FROM SCHEEL'S INTERPRETATION, NEITHER DID THEY CONFIRM IT. IN THE SECOND INSTANCE (WEST BERLINER PARTICIPATION IN FRG-SOVIET AGREEMENTS), THE FRG ACCEPTED ORAL ASSURANCES FROM THE SOVIETS WITH NO CONFIRMING PUBLIC STATEMENTS.

7. THESE EXPERIENCES, ALONG WITH SOVIET RECALCITRANCE ON THE PEACEFUL CHANGE ISSUE IN CSCE (SEPTTEL), HAVE BROUGHT OUR FRG SOURCES IN MOSCOW TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE ENTERED A HOLDING PATTERN ON IMPROVING POLITICAL RELATIONS WITH THE WEST. WE FEEL JUDGMENT IS OVERDRAWN (REFTTEL). ZEMSKOV'S RHETORIC ON BERLIN MAY BE A BIT TOUGHER THAN IN THE RECENT PAST, BUT THE SOVIET POSITION HAS NEVER BEEN INCLINED TO COMPROMISE ON THESE NUTS-AND-BOLTS BERLIN ISSUES, AND IN OUR VIEW IS UNLIKELY TO DO SO FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

8. SOVIET PRESS COVERAGE OF THE FRG HAS TOUGHENED IN TONE RECENTLY, BUT THE INCREASING FIRMNESS HAS BEEN FOCUSED ON SUCH PREDICTABLE ITEMS AS THE STRAUSS VISIT TO CHINA, ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES, AND THE BROUHAHA OVER THE GDR-AUSTRIAN CONSULAR AGREEMENT. THE ONLY SUBSTANTIVE COMMENT ON SOVIET-FRG RELATIONS TO APPEAR RECENTLY WAS A SIGNED COMMENTARY IN IZVESTIYA ON JANUARY 24. THE COMMENTARY MADE THE EXPECTED POINTS ON THE AUSTRIAN-GDR ISSUE, BUT DIRECTED ITS CRITICISM PRIMARILY AT A STATEMENT BY KOHL AT A CDU GATHERING, NOTING ONLY THAT "VOICES FROM BONN" HAD ALSO SPOKEN OUT AGAINST AUSTRIAN ACCEPTANCE OF GDR CITIZENSHIP DETERMINATION. CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 MOSCOW 01226 282038Z

9. IN SUM, THE SKEPTICISM EXPRESSED BY EMBASSY BONN FOLLOWING THE SCHMIDT VISIT SEEMS BORNE OUT, SINCE EVEN THE GERMANS HERE ARE NOW CRYING THE BLUES. MATLOCK

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